

critical digest



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This Week in NYC

A 24 week Off Broadway season was set to start in the fall at Jan Hus House, E 74 St, by Dorothy Raedler's "American Savoyards." The company will present 12 weeks of "nostalgic operettas," the current limited run production of The Student Prince at the Greenwich Mews being a pilot. Naughty Mariatta, The Vagabond King and The Merry Widow will be produced. Following this a 12 week season of Gilbert & Sullivan will be done. The company will then tour during Apr and May, prior to a summer stand of both "nostalgic" and Gilbert & Sullivan operettas.

Plays

The Best Man closed after 521 performances... Donnybrook scheduled to close after 68 performances at loss of \$225,000 unless weekend business picked up... My Fair Lady set new record for longest run musical at Wed matinee -2213 performances... The Sound of Music resumed after two week vacation... Do Re Mi to vacation Jul 24-Aug 21.

A Thousand Clowns a new play by Herb Gardner to be first tenant at Biltmore... Jennie a musical adaptation of Robert Nathan's novel "Portrait of Jennie" by William Marchant-Albert Hague-Arnold Horwitt to be directed by Carmen Capalbo, due Mar 1.

Players

Diahann Carroll to star in untitled Richard Rodgers- Samuel Taylor musical due in Feb.. Elisabeth Bergner to star in First Love by Samuel Taylor, her first NYC role since 1948 in The Cup of Trembling... Margaret Leighton to co-star with Bette Davis in The Night of the Iguana... Barbara Nichols signed for Let It Ride... John McMartin to be featured in Blood, Sweat and Stanley Poole... Patricia Cutts joins Kean... Keir Dullea added to The Short Happy Life... Richard Pleasants, 52, former manager of McCarter Theatre, NJ, died... Alan Marshall, 52, died in Chicago while on tour with Mae West's Sextette.

NYC Calendar

Walt Whitman Am I- 41st St Theatre (125 W 41)- 7/17 & 7/31 . Barbara Griner-Eleanor Horn present two Mon performances of one man show by Bruce Millholland.

Troilus and Cressida-Stratford, Conn 7/23. American Shake-speare Festival & Academy adds third bill to repertory of As You Like It and Macbeth.

Broadway Business

Variety reported severe drop in business at most shows following holiday, with only two sell-outs-Carnival and Mary, Mary.

Theatre Book Notes

The Caretaker and The Dumb Waiter by Harold Pinter published in paperback volume by Grove Press (\$1.75)... "Stanislavsky on the Art of the Stage" introduced and translated by David Magarshack published by Hill & Wang (\$4.50.)

Theatre Record Notes

Milk and Honey original cast album to be made by RCA Victor.

Theatre Film Notes

The Living Room film with Rex Harrison and Rachel Roberts to be produced by Graham Greene... No Exit film with Viveca Lindfors, Rita Gam, Ben Piazza to be made in Buenos Aires by Aires Film International, Tad Danielewski director. Cast all members of NY Repertory Co on tour in Latin America... The Blacks may be filmed in Ireland by Seven Arts- John Huston.

Tickets

Citizens Union of NY urged a careful study of Broadway theatre organization, or lack of organization, instead of a repeal of the 5% city admission tax. Report stated that Broadway must organize itself to meet modern conditions.

Off Broadway

Diff'rent revival of Eugene O'Neill directed by Paul Shyre with Sada Thompson to be presented on Sept 28 at Actors Playhouse... All in Love a new musical adaptation of Sheridan's "The Rivals" to be presented Oct 6 at 41st St Theatre by Jacques Urbant, John Terry Brown, Stella Holt... Bella a new musical comedy by Tom O'Malley and Jane Douglass to be presented Oct 15 by Lance Barklin-Ned Hendrickson.

King of the Dark Chambers playing Wed matinee instead of two Sat eve performances... Estelle Parsons replaced Lu Leonard as Mrs Peacham, Three Penny Opera... Astrid Wilstrud replaced Lori March, Hedda Gabler... Louise Stubbs replaced Ethel Ayler, The Blacks... Marian Mercer, Little Mary Sunshine, to double in "The Prickley Pair" 11 PM revue at Show-Place, W 4th St.

NY Shakespeare

Kathleen Widdoes and Margaret Hall to be featured in A Midsummer Night's Dream Jul 31 at Wollman Rink, Joel Friedman director... First week-end mid-day presentation of Romeo and Juliet recordings at Music Grove, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, reported by Times as a flop with few listeners.

Yiddish Theatre

Go Fight City Hall Yiddish-American musical due Oct 30 at Mayfair, W 46, signed Menachem Rubin for lead... Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen new musical by Sholom Secunda to open season Oct 9 at Anderson, 2nd Av.

Legal Dept

No progress reported after five weeks of negotiations between League of NY Theatres and stagehands, whose three year contract expires Jul 31. Latter seek 20% wage increase, pension and welfare benefits and paid vacations for all members.

DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

Much Ado About Nothing- Central Park, NY 7/5-7/22. 7 pros filed on first presentation of sixth season of free productions of NY Shakespeare Festival, directed by Joe Papp with Nan Martin, J. D. Cannon, Albert Quinton, Philip Sterling, Anne Pearson. Opening night performance at Wollman Memorial Rink was hindered by persistent rain which halted show for a 20 minute break and then made presentation of the final scenes of Act V impossible. Papp's direction, sets by Eldon Elder, costumes by Theoni Aldredge shared plaudits with cast, with several reviewers feeling that pace at times too lively. Taubman, Times, praised vibrant, colorful production, spirited mixture of Shakespeare's words, dance and music. Times aisle-sitter noted Papp tolerated obvious business to garner easy laughs when elegance and consistency in style would have been preferable. Crist, Herald Tribune, raved for better than ever presentation which marks Papp's coming of age as a director in a production that does full justice to play and everyone involved. Some superlatives, Arts editor concluded, are simply understatement. Watt, News, enjoyed handsome, capering production which brought scope and color to Shakespeare's nimble comedy of insult. Coleman, Mirror, cheered inventive production staged with a goodly measure of style. Though some of the business was on hokey side, Mirror man noted audience loved it. Herridge, Post, recommended another fine, free production of a witty, bubbling comedy which after a few days of running will have everything running smoothly. Drama editor also applauded interesting stage business invented by Papp to cover talky spots. Kastendieck, Journal American, okayed vivacious colorful production, good, lively and well-done with the direction ingeniously enlivening thought at too fast a pace at times. Aston, World Telegram & Sun, applauded treasure of inventiveness in attractive theatre, the leads delightful earthy and believable. WTS reviewer's sole complaint was that entrances on sides in new outdoor theatre were too far from the stage.

Susan Slept Here- 41 St Theatre (125 W 41)- 7/11. 6 con-Times, Herald Tribune, Mirror, Post, Journal American, World Telegram & Sun- and 0 pro- filed on production of comedy by Steve Fisher and Alex Gottlieb, presented by Barbara Griner-Eleanor Horn, staged by Matt Cimber with Alan Dale and Joy Harmon as second production of "All Star Summer Comedy Festival." Reviewers generally panned play as trite and unfunny, as well as leading players and direction, with the only words of praise saved for the supporting players in 1951 comedy. Though presented throughout the country this is the play's first NY presentation. Esterow, Times, marked it as a thin comedy in which the actors stumbled on lines and in which the sound effects flopped. Morgenstern, Herald Tribune, panned witless, tasteless, hopeless play with permissive direction and screaming actresses. Coleman, Mirror, felt as if cast directed itself in play which was a patchwork of implausible situations and primitive patter. Herridge, Post, condemned inept play with barrage of third rate gags and with Harmon hitting a new high in overacting. O'Connor, Journal American, who recalls covering 1954 film version of play with Debbie Reynolds and Dick Powell, remembered that picture was less than brilliant. In current version "stars" are not very good, Journal American drama editor summed. Aston, WTS, vetoed it as transparent and senseless, with supporting player Charles Randall coming off as best.



SUMMER THEATRE REVIEWS

Two Queens of Love and Beauty- Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, Penn 7/12. 1 con - Post- filed on new play by William Hoffman presented by Michael Ellis- Jay Julien with Ann Harding, Georgia Burke, Claudia Morgan and Joan Hackett. Post critic panned play as tedious, overwritten, unresolved mishmash that suggests at various moments bad Tennessee Williams, bad Arthur Laurents and bad Shelagh Delaney. As for cast only Burke has a good part, while Harding's role was embarrassing.

NY Repertory- Westport, Conn, Country Playhouse- 7/9. Taubman, Times, approved of NY Repertory Co productions of twin-bill of The Zoo Story and Miss Julie and I Am A Camera before group left for start of Latin American tour this week. Twin-bill staged by Tad Danielewski with William Daniels and Ben Piazza in the Albee play and Viveca Lindfors and Morgan Sterne in the Strindberg work the company should make a good impression, critic predicts. Though Van Druten play was in tentative shape under Michael Howard's direction, it also should do well. The Times reviewer doubts if Latin American audiences will be so simple as to decide from this repertory that we are a depraved nation, as some fear.



THEATRE RECORD COMMENTS

Fanny musical sound-track from new Warner Bros film with Morris Stoloff's orchestra recommended by Watt, News as a very engaging disc... The Winter's Tale three disc album by Shakespeare Recording Society with John Gielgud, Peggy Ashcroft praised for hardly having a flaw in its entire large cast or performance by Lask, Times. ...Krapp's Last Tape original NY cast album with Donald Davis as sole player (Spoken Arts Records) approved by Times reviewer as a superbly rounded portrait of a squalid old man.



NYC PLAY DIARY

Troilus and Cressida-Stratford, Conn 7/23... Little Hut-41st St 7/25... Midsummer Night's Dream- Central Park 7/31.

Moon is Blue- 41st St 8/8... Tender Trap- 41st St 8/22 ...Richard II- Central Park 8/28.

Lilo De Paris-Mayfair- 9/5... Pirates of Penzance- Phoenix 9/6... Ghosts- 4th St 9/14... High Fidelity- Am - bassador- 9/25... From the Second City- Royale 9/26... 4th Av North- Madison Av- 9/27... Diff'rent- Actors Playhouse 9/28.

Sail Away- Broadhurst 10/3... The Caretaker- Lyceum 10/4... Blood Sweat and Stanley Poole- Morosco 10/5... Clandestine on the Morning Line- 10/5... Let's Ride It- O'Neill 10/6... 9 O Clock Theatre- Golden 10/8... Milk & Honey- Beck 10/10... How to Succeed- 46th St 10/14... All in Love- 41st St- 10/16... Cook for Mr. General- Playhouse 10/19... Kwamina- 10/23



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT



PROS & CONS BY TMK

COSTLY LEGIT GIFTS...Theatre can be considered as a house party where each guest is expected to bring a gift, or else settle for staying outside and looking in the windows, as one does with TV and films, suggests Kerr, Herald Tribune. The fun must be put together freshly every single night in our presence and with our co-operation. Thus there is no reason why theatre should not be expensive. Instead of assuring customers that we'll eventually find a means of producing plays as though they were so much malleable plastic, might we not do better trying to persuade them that theatre is not plastic but sheer mercury and that the high cost of mercury is worth it?

COLUMN TIPS...Helen Hayes wants to resign from forthcoming Latin American tour of Theatre Guild-American Repertory Co, hears Winchell, Mirror... Hal March and Mary Martin will star in Fanny Brice Story, predicts Gardner, Herald Tribune... James Thurber's next Broadway show to consist of four original sketches, tips Wilson, Post.

PRO 'CONNECTION' FILM...The Connection is the watershed of our culture, explains Barry, Post. Paris reporter feels that one's reaction to it means one falls this side or that of what's going on in the minds of the artists and poets. They are not ahead of their times, they are the only ones of it. The rest of us are living on the exhaustible interest of accumulated culture. Cannes Film Festival award winning film made by Shirley Clarke in NYC is the candid, and thus occasionally crude, filming of a real scene in a junkie pad. You don't really believe it in the theatre, but you do on film.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...NY theatre managers are as penny wise and pound foolish as ever, comments Davis, News. The new standard format for alphabetical show ads averages \$100 savings per week a show, but requires a potential theatregoer to need a magnifying glass to read the fine print... Winchell, Mirror, knows scads of alleged producers who should be forced to pay newspapers for space critics waste mentioning their flops... Keeping the record straight Aston, World Telegram & Sun, discovered that the bright solo dancer he liked in Donnybrook is Mickey Gunnerson, and the Manchurian swimming tiger at the Flushing, NY, water show is really a she, though another reviewer listed it as a male animal.

REPERTORY THEATRE QUIZ...Lincoln Center Repertory Co officials were urged by Taubman, Times, to invite the public to participate in expressing its reaction to approved proposals and to offer its own ideas.

DRAMA MAIL BOX...Times and Herald Tribune readers filed verbal objections to designs released for the five tier New York State Theatre at Lincoln Center which may house the NY City Center. Peggy Wood and another Herald Tribune reader agreed house was okay for opera and ballet, but never for theatre. While a Times reader panned 18th century style of new theatre and hoped the designers are informed of improvements made in theatre construction in the last 150 years.

Susan Slept Here is a very bad production of a very bad play. After presenting a lively, professional production of *The Voice of the Turtle* two weeks ago the managers of the 41st St Theatre evidently wanted to remind their customers how awful summer stock can be at its worst. Now that they have proved their case with "stars" who can neither act nor remember their lines, with a supporting cast inventing worst topical ad-libs than the authors wrote, and doors equipped without knobs, NY's own summer theatre should return as soon as possible to first class productions. Let's hope the first presentation wasn't beginner's luck.

NY has the nasty kind of summer festival that kills off its outstanding attraction, the theatre, at a time when culture, entertainment and/or show business is booming in every other section of the land. Shakespeare festivals are being born at a rate surpassing the population explosion. TV stars are increasing oil-well holdings via the huge profits earned from packages playing 3000 seat tents. Visitors to NYC are at a peak during the summer months. Many New Yorkers spend their two weeks with pay in NYC. Thus there are more people and more potential theatre ticket buyers in NYC in the summer than at any other time. Naturally then this is the time the producers agree on cutting down the size of their daily listings in the paper. The whole alphabetical listing now printed is about half the size ad of most horror films.

"Vacation" is the theatre's newest disease designed to kill off any Broadway production that survives to Jul 1. Everybody's vacation is involved--stars, stagehands, and shows. The wishful thinking prediction that if a show runs a full season the star can close down a show from one to four weeks for a rest is a nightmare the producers agree to months before the production opens. As the League of NY Theatres contracts' now stand the star usually gets paid, the cast don't, the band does, the stagehands don't. Latter group is out to change this and a possible strike might result Jul 31 if producers do not agree to give all backstage crew members paid vacations. The immediate solution is a cinch--let all theatre workers from stars to stagehands always be associated with flops and have eternal vacations punctuated by one week stands.

Citizens Union of NY is a dedicated group of civic minded people who try each year to clarify the voting issues and to give forthright estimates of candidates. Warming up for the hot NY Mayor race they have voiced their non-partisan views on theatre taxes. Instead of the demanded repeal of the 5% NY City admission tax they suggest a careful study of Broadway theatre's organization, or lack of organization. Mayor Wagner lost in an ever-growing mass of would-be candidates seems to have let the issue drop.

Anyone want to bet that modern producers would not ask William Shakespeare to cut his royalties on summer productions if the Bard of Avon was a practicing playwright today?



OUTER
BROADWAY
THEATRE
LETTER

College Theatre

Antioch College Area Theatre, Yellow Springs, Ohio presenting "Five Faces of Fantasy" program at new "Amphitheatre Under the Stars." A Midsummer Night's Dream opened Jul 5 to be followed by--Death of a Salesman, Doctor In spite of Himself, Heartbreak House, and The Enchanted... Oberlin, Ohio, Gilbert & Sullivan Players returned to Highfield Theatre, Falmouth, Mass Jul 11 with The Gondoliers... La Loca to be presented at Wagner College, Staten Island, NY Jul 20-22 with Crystal Field.

Robert Schnitzler appointed Executive Director, University Theatre, Univ of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Enlarged year round drama season to provide opportunities to professional directors, playwrights, actors... Abe Feder to teach stage lighting at St. Louis Univ, Mo.

New Theatres

Outdoor amphitheatre to be constructed at Stamford, Conn as gift in 12 acre tract of park and a center for the performing arts from Jesse Hartman.

Play Contests

\$1000 first prize for best full-length play for children in English on a Jewish theme to be presented by Jewish Theatre for Children, 426 W 58, NYC. Entries close Apr 15. Winning manuscript to be produced in NYC and on tour.

Award Dept

Gertrude Berg, A Majority of One, named "Actress of the Year" by Sarah Siddons Society, Chicago playgoers group.

Shakespeare

Southeastern Shakespeare Festival first season to be presented by Academy Theatre, Atlanta, Ga Jul 18-Aug 13 at Emory Univ. King Lear, Richard II and As You Like It to be presented in repertory.

Akron Shakespeare Festival to be presented this summer at Ohio Theatre, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio instead of Stan Hywet Estate. Five play season includes-Taming of the Shrew, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Macbeth and Twelfth Night.

Summer Playhouses

White Barn Playhouse, Westport, Conn, Lucille Lortel producer, to devote 15th season to experimental plays---Jul 23 Piece and Precise by Lewis John Carlino...Jul 30 In the First Place by William Packard...Aug 6 In a Backward Country by Evan Jones...Aug 13 The Acrobat by Berry Fleming...Aug 27 The Purist Agony by Harry Tierney, Jr and The Typist by Murray Schiegel... Sept 3 a new play by Paris author Obaldia.

Rip Van Winkle Players to open second season at outdoor Thornton Burgess Park Theatre, Samwich, Mass, Joe Jefferson producer...A season of three plays to be directed by Barbara Sichel at Zoo Indoor Theatre, Toledo, Ohio with casts composed of local community theatre members. Opening Jul 23 with Marriage Go Round...New steel structure replaced tent used by Wagon Wheel Playhouse, Warsaw, Ind, which opened sixth season with Annie Get Your Gun, directed by Tom Roland, Manchester, Ind. College.

NY producers of All the Way Home refused injunction to halt Jul 15 Playhouse in the Park, Philadelphia, presentation which had been contracted for before the Pulitzer Prize play was reprieved.

Tryouts This Week

The Seventh Dawn by Arthur Meiselman at Players Art Theatre, Rochester, NY 7/14-20.

My Heart Don't Say So- by Gerald Reidenbaugh at University Regent Theatre, Syracuse, NY 7/19-22.

Between Seasons -by Malcolm Welles at Westport, Conn. Country Playhouse 7/17-22.

Three Words in No Time -by Michel de Ghelderode, translated by Lyons Phelps at Playhouse-on-the-Wharf, Provincetown, Mass 7/17-22.

Wind of Heaven- a new play by Emlyn Williams at Merry-Go-Round Theatre, Sturbridge, Mass. 7/17-22.

Two Queens of Love and Beauty by William Hoffman at Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, Penn 7/10-22.

The Unexpected Guest- a new play by Agatha Christie at Green Hills Theatre, Reading, Penn 7/18-22.

Road Shows

Kicks & Co to open pre NY tour Oct 7 at Arie Crown Theatre, Chicago, 5000 seat house is in \$35 million McCormick Place Exposition Center...The Best Man to tour in fall with Melvyn Douglas and Frank Lovejoy...We've Had Some Fun one man show with Tom Ewell to open Aug 10 at Fayetteville, Penn, Playhouse prior to fall tour of colleges.

London

Joan Littlewood has resigned as producer-director of Theatre Royal and will present plays on her own after a world tour...The Bishop's Bonfire by Sean O'Casey opens Jul 26 at Mermaid...Lady Chatterley an adaptation of the D H Lawrence novel by John Hart to be presented in Aug at Arts...Little Mary Sunshine to be presented in Feb... "Variety" poll of 17 critics picked--The Best Man, Beyond the Fringe, John Whiting's The Devils, and Sartre's Altona as season's bests.

Paris

Luther new play by John Osborne presented by English Stage Co, Tony Richardson director, drew mixed notices at Sarah Bernhardt Theatre, but raves for Albert Finney in title role...Living Theatre production of The Connection was panned by Paris critics at Vieux Columbier Theatre, but won Paris Festival prizes from International Circle of Young Critics and also French Syndicate of Drama and Music Critics.

Latin America

My Fair Lady production in Mexico City in Spanish to open tour Aug 6 at National Theatre, Buenos Aires...The Importance of Being Oscar one man show with Michael Mac Liammoir to tour eight countries this summer and then return to NYC.

Edinburgh Festival

The Seven Deadly Sins by Bertold Brecht and Kurt Weill with Lotte Lenya to be presented Sept 4-9 at Edinburgh Festival.



"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.

